



# NEWS RELEASE

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### Caltrans Acts to Protect Birds on Petaluma River Bridge

PETALUMA – Caltrans biologists on Tuesday continued inspecting work sites to make sure that nesting swallows were no longer becoming entangled in netting draped beneath bridge decks to keep the birds away from construction work on the State Route 116 Interchange and the Petaluma River Bridge on U.S. 101.

The netting was used to keep the birds out of the construction zone, but some birds had apparently found openings where the netting connects to the underside of the bridges allowing them inside where they became trapped. Working immediately and throughout the weekend, the contractor pulled the nets tight eliminating the gaps, and the needless loss of birds appears to have stopped.

“We don’t want another bird to die,” said Caltrans spokeswoman Tamie McGowen. “That’s why we have the nets up in the first place.”

Caltrans employs biologists to ensure compliance with both environmental laws and permits issued by state and federal regulators. Those biologists report the tightening efforts appeared to have solved the problem, but would continue monitoring the site for bird safety. The contractor will continue to tighten the nets as needed to further ensure bird safety.

The \$77 million project will replace the existing Petaluma River Bridge with a new, wider structure that will eventually accommodate new HOV lanes. It will also eliminate nine access points, reconstruct the Petaluma Boulevard South interchange, and construct or widen 2.5 miles of frontage roads. A separate \$26 million project will widen the southbound State Route 116 separation bridge, and replace the northbound State Route 116 separation bridge.

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